

Effective Hand Washing



1. Palm to palm



2. Right palm over left dorsum and left palm over right dorsum



3. Palm to palm fingers interlaced



4. Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked

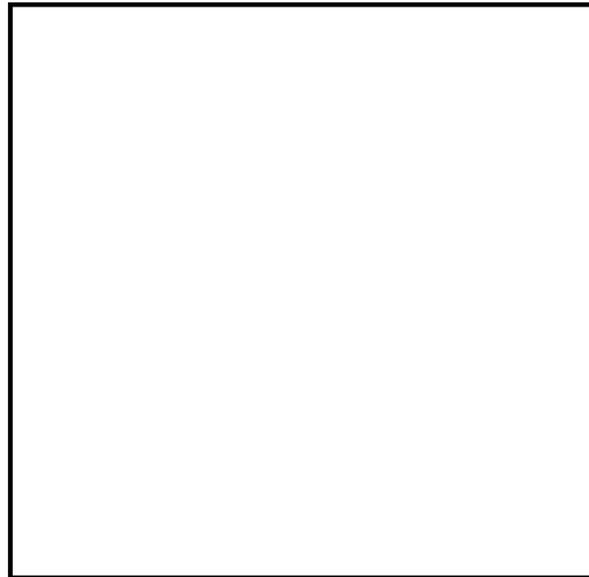


5. Rotational rubbing of right thumb clasped in left palm and vice versa



6. Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use the box provided below to remind you.



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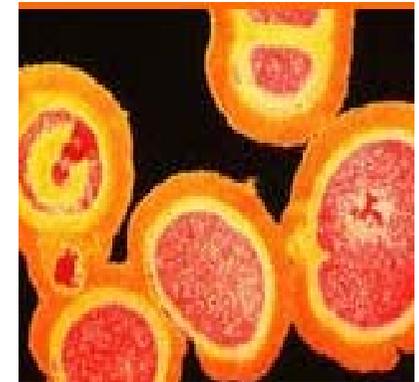
Management Services/Accreditation Licensing Co-ordinator

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St. John's Hospital
Limerick

Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE)



Information Leaflet

**For
Patients,
Relatives
and Visitors**

What is VRE ?

VRE is a shortened term used when referring to vancomycin-resistant enterococci. The term vancomycin-resistant means that the antibiotic vancomycin, often used to treat infections with enterococci, is no longer effective.

What are enterococci?

Enterococci are micro-organisms, commonly found in the bowels of most animals, including humans, where they make up part of the normal bacterial flora. They can also be found in the human genital tract.

Most people who carry enterococci don't suffer any ill effects. Carrying enterococci harmlessly like this is called 'colonisation'

Sometimes enterococci cause infections if they enter the body. This is more likely to happen to people who are already unwell, particularly those who are in hospital with a serious illness.

What type of infections do enterococci cause?

Enterococci can cause a range of different infections including:-

- Wound infections
- Urinary tract infections
- Infections of the abdomen and pelvis
- Heart valve infection (endocarditis)
- Bacteraemia (blood stream infections)

Who is at risk of developing VRE?

People who have been previously treated with the antibiotic vancomycin are at the highest risk of developing VRE. This may occur if the enterococci which are part of the person's normal flora develops its own resistance mechanism to the antibiotic vancomycin.

Why is VRE a problem?

VRE can spread between patients, especially those who have been in hospital for a long time or who have received certain antibiotics especially vancomycin. Therefore, some pre-cautions are necessary namely attention to hand washing and good standards of hygiene. For some patients this can mean being nursed in a single room.

This will not affect the patients nursing, medical and total care.

How does VRE spread?

The main method of spread is on patient's equipment, hospital environment and the hands of staff.

How is VRE diagnosed?

VRE is found in a stool sample sent to the laboratory for testing. It can also be found in samples from other sites for example wounds, urine.

How is VRE treated?

Treatment is decided on an individual basis as sometimes VRE is present but not causing an infection.

Healthy people who are colonised with VRE do not need treatment.

Patients with indwelling catheters who have developed infections due to VRE may need to have the catheter Removed.

When a patient has a serious infection e.g. bacteraemia caused by VRE, it will be necessary to give antibiotics Intravenously.

Will having VRE delay my discharge from hospital?

No. You will be discharged as soon as your medical condition allows.

Can family and friends visit as normal?

In healthy people, illness due to VRE is rare. Therefore family and friends, of patients with VRE, are not at risk and hand washing is the only action necessary before and after each visit.

What happens when I leave hospital?

Good hygiene practice should continue at home, including hand washing after using the toilet preparing food and before eating.

Your normal household cleaning method is sufficient and your laundry can be washed in the usual way.

You do not need to restrict visitors or your activities at home.